

MAY 1986

TWIN CITIES ATARI INTEREST GROUP

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President: Dick Johnson (521-0245) Vice President: Jim Glish
Treasurer: Phyllis Landsman Secretary: Dave Stengel
Newsletter Editors: Cory Johnson & Dave Stengel

Editor's Notes by Cory Johnson

Apathy: feeling or showing no emotion, interest, lack of motivation, etc.; indifference.

I think that a definition of apathy is an appropriate way to start out this column. Apathy is running rampant through the club, and the effects are now showing. The newsletter seldom has any original material, the Disk of the Month is relying on downloads from BBS's, and asking for volunteers, for any task, within the club is a fruitless effort. I can't give an explanation as to why this is happening, but I can tell you, that for TAIG to survive it has to stop.

At this point, TAIG's survival is in question, and the reason is because of the apathy that the general members are showing. For some reason, many are under the misconception of "I paid my \$15, now provide for me!" Sorry to break the news to you folks, but it doesn't, and can't work that way. What the group needs is a commitment from each and every member. That commitment doesn't have to be lengthy, it can be as small as reviewing 1 program a year in the newsletter, or wrighting a program for the disk of the month. The commitment can become larger, writing a monthly column for the newsletter, or storing club equipment from month to month. Finally, there are the largest, but most satisfying commitments of all, that is being an officer, or other volunteer for the club. Many hours of work go into putting

a newsletter or disk together, or planning for a meeting, but when the finnished product is there, the time commitment is worth it.

The time for the commitment is now, with elections approaching. It can not be put off until later. I can guarntee that if we keep running the way we are, TAIG will not exist by next May.

Article submission

Articles should be submitted in standard text files (Atari Writer, Hometext, Speedscript) or in Letter Perfect format.

If you don't own a wordprocessor, you can enter an article into BASIC using REM statments. Or, send legibly written or typed text (make any schematics legible also, we can't reprint what we can't read) to

Cory Johnson 1835 Shadyview Circle, Plymouth, MN. 55447

Dave Stengel 3230 Shadyview Lane, Plymouth, MN. 55447

Articles may also be dropped off at

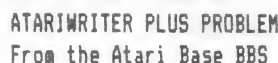
Wizard's Work 18th and 36th, New Hope, MN.

If you wish, you can also upload your article to the BBS. Leave a message to the sysop stating that the upload was an article. The BBS number is 473-2897

DEADLINE

Deadline for submission is the 10th of the month. Any articles recived after the 10th will be held until the next newsletter.

(Submit an article this month)



Remeber, there were only a few disks with this problem, no cause fo alarm. We caught the problem before many went out.

The meeting was dismissed.



Southern Bell/AT&T traced the call and ordered a cease and desist based on harassment with threat of discontinuance of service. The TV reporter, a typical hallow-eyed beauty, said, "And what is so amazing is that Mr. Jones could use such sophisticated equipment in his own home to carry on such a tatic." Yawn.

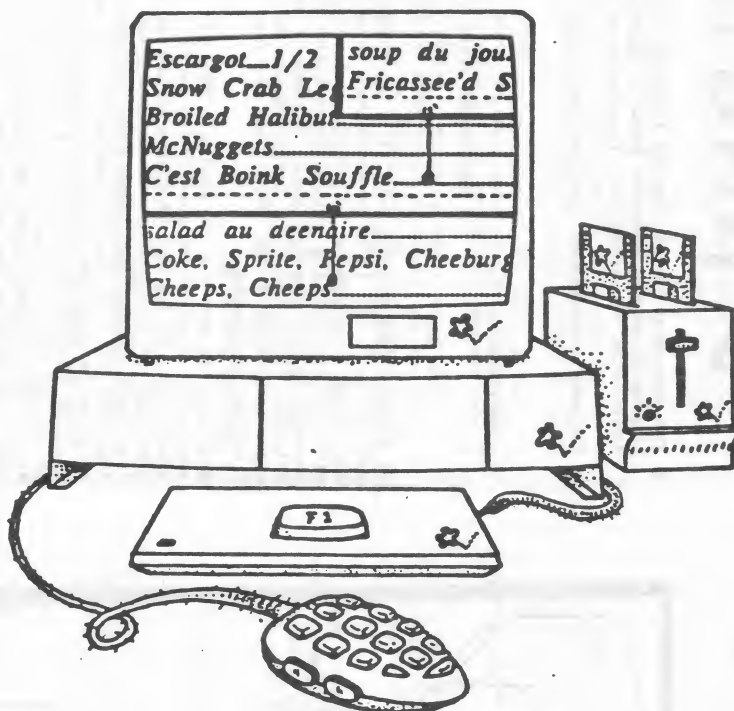
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Bungled Software

- Invisicalc Database
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- DORK I, II, III and Suspenders by INFOcon
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Benchmarks

Erostosthenes Sieve: 2.3 hrs
Bouncing Ball: 1.6 min

\$209900

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Here's what the experts had to say:

"It'll be a sure-fire HIT"

Larry Tribble, President,
Mindset Corporation

"Gotta be the most neatest, awesome, boss, tubular, trick piece of machinery around today."

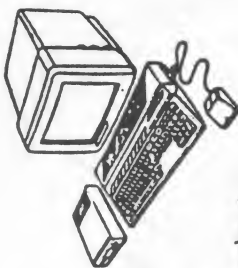
Adam Osborne

"A very powerful product; and at those prices, Amoeba will be around for a long time."

Clive Sinclair

"All you need is great graphics"

Mike Zuwalb, owner,
"The Amoeba Store"
(formerly "The Spectra-Video Store")



The STING review

* The 6th meeting of the ST Interest Group (STING) was held in the Bennett Room at Dunwoody Technical Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota on April 2nd, 1986.

* 31 people attended, and at last count we have 5/26 paid members.

A BEGINNERS LOOK AT 4X FORTH

by
Rick Gilliland

4X FORTH. Some people call it 4 by FORTH and others 4 X FORTH. No matter what you call it, it's an excellent language. For the past six years, I have been programming in BASIC, and when I bought my ST I decided that with the new machine should come a new language. Upon reading the various reviews in the popular Atari magazines and listening to the advice of friends, 'Hello Doug!', I decided to get either Lattice C or 4X FORTH, which ever came first. Well, as you can tell by this article, 4X FORTH was first on the scene.

Now some of you may be asking, "Why not just stick with Basic?" Well, the answer to that is because FORTH is much faster and very much more versatile. In FORTH, if there is a command that you need that the language does not include, then you go ahead and make the command yourself. That is the heart of the language. When making a program you use smaller commands together to form larger commands, and so on down the line until your program is complete. Doing things this way makes it easier to debug the program because if there is a problem in a certain command, you go right to it and fix it, and it is fixed wherever it is used in your program. FORTH is a higher level language than assembly language, so if you need some commands to run extra fast, you can program them in assembly language right in the FORTH language. Plus another reason for switching over for me was that the Basic that was supplied with my ST has a lot of bugs in it, and I did not like the way they used the four separate windows for EDIT, COMMAND, OUTPUT, and LIST.

4X FORTH comes with a good amount of documentation, although it is not totally complete and could be a little more instructive to new users. Since I have turned in my registration card, I have already received an updated version of 4X FORTH that fixes several bugs and includes many more commands. And now rumored is a third version in the works that includes the GEM commands.

For those that wish to develop and market their own programs, there comes a 500 dollar licensing contract. That may seem to be pretty steep, but compared to other languages, the price is relatively cheap.

One other point is that 4X FORTH is not copy-protected, so you can make back-up copies. The method that the Dragon Group, which by the way is the maker of this fine product, uses to prevent illegal copying is a serial number for each copy that they sell that is put in different locations on your disk and which is hard to find. So when you turn in your registration, they know what your serial number is and can track down any illegal copies.

All-in-all, I think 4X FORTH is a very excellent language for both beginners and more advanced programmers, and I recommend it highly.

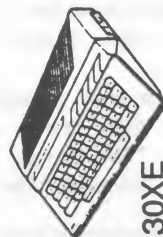
- Rick Gilliland -

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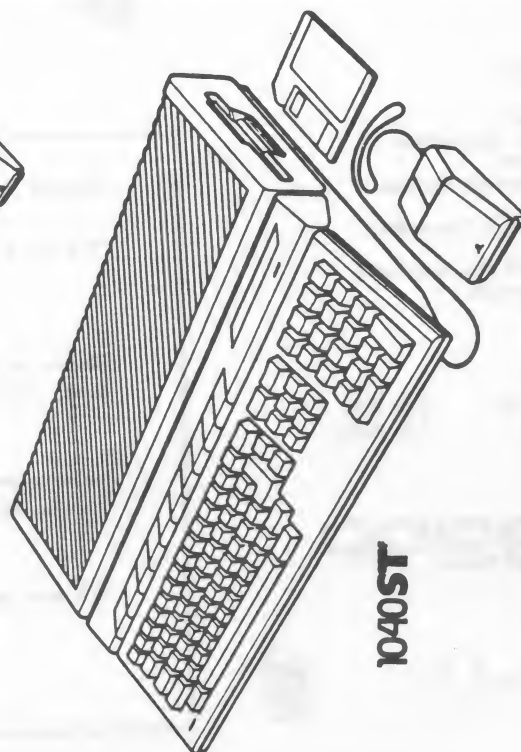
520ST



130XE



1040ST



USER FRIENDLY

8461 PLAZA BLVD. NE 55432
SPRING LAKE PARK, MN 55432
(612) 786-8181

NEWS & TIDBITS:

- * TOS in ROM chips are now up to 70 dollars + installation.
- * Jerry Fournelle's column in the April 14th issue of INFOWORLD said that the developers of Mac Cartridge could make it work by using the "random access memory chips instead of ROMs; you just need to load in the Macintosh ROM code from disk." Jerry went on to say that even if Apple "stonewalls" Mac Cartridge, it will "spread like wildfire" because it is "far to good to suppress." For those of you not familiar to Mac Cartridge, which was introduced at the 11th Computer Faire in CA, it is a gadget that plugs into the cartridge port on our ST's and enables much of Macintosh's software, such as EXCEL, to run on our machines. "Heavily protected" software will not run on it.
- * If any of you do Desktop Publishing (the new buzzword) there is a new group of desktop publishers and would-be desktop publishers who meet at the Artaign on 26th Ave So. and E. 26th St. at 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of each month. Dale Archibald of the COMPUTER USER launched this user group since there is a lot of interest nowadays in this new area. It looks like yours truly will be doing their newsletter too.

* 1ST-WORD FILES ARE PORTABLE OVER TO ST-WRITER FILES

By clicking off the "WP" mode of your 1WD file, and using the SAVE AS feature to rename the file, you can save your 1ST-WORD file in ASCII form which you can then load into ST-WRITER, and with very minor touching up, you can use the STW program to print out your file without that annoying formfeed that 1WD performs before it starts printing one's files and which does not permit one to print out envelopes, use single sheet paper such as pre-printed stationery, etc.

After loading the ASCII converted file into STW, one must add the printer codes that are usual to STW. I've found that an abbreviated set of codes seems to work just as well with my Epson LX-80 printer, so that I don't have to type in all the codes. (Why?) For my purposes, settings of L3, R80, T2, and B0 work well with a ported-over file.

The only other thing one needs to do is to add 3 carriage returns between each page, since for some strange reason, STW likes to eat 2-3 lines of text at the bottom of a page because of page-wrap.

The porting of files is one-way: STW files can NOT be ported back over to 1WD files, even after stripping off the control codes. STW seems to add some codes of its own to a file ("Go, Run, Run ST-WRITER", etc). Has anyone figured out how to defeat that so that one might possibly load STW files into 1WD?

It's handy to use 1WD to create one's files since it is pretty close to being WYSIWYG, and it clearly shows you when you are at the bottom of the page, which at best is an educated guess or a real nuisance to keep track of in STW.

This issue of THE STING REVIEW has been written in the most part in 1WD and then ported over to STW. I had done part of this page originally in STW, but it got too many carriage returns that put many lines double-spaced apart, so I'm retyping it all in 1WD, and then re-reporting it over again to STW. While that is something of a nuisance, I CAN see that page 7 is only 2 lines away! Only wish that STW had a "print x" feature, instead of having to turn off the printer - and wait.....(TH)

 FUTURE MEETINGS: All are on the 1st Wednesday of each month.
 Meetings are in the basement of Dunwoody Technical Institute (the building on the west side) in the Bennett Room. Meetings start at 7:00 PM and seem to run about 2 hours.

 May 7th June 4th July 2nd August 6th September 3rd

USE OF THE ESCAPE KEY by Tom Tolstead

Eso = ESCAPE

The ESCAPE key has many uses on the ST. For example, when renaming a file with the SHOW INFORMATION option in the FILE menu, you are confronted with what is known as Editable Text in the dialog box. If you want to change the entire name of the file, you can simply type Esc (push the Eso key), and the file name will go away leaving you with a blank area to type in. This particular example works on the CONTROL PANEL and most other dialog boxes that I have seen.

The ESCAPE key can also be used to re-log a disk (i.e. update the file list in an open window after you have changed disks.) the actual function of the key, like all others on the ST, can be changed under program control. But these examples are valid for the desktop, and may be of some use.

- Tom Tolstead -

NEW PRODUCTS:

- * The guest of honor this evening was the 1040 ST which is now out!! User Friendly got a few of the machines, most of which were pre-ordered by excited would-be owners.
- * The PC BOX, an IBM emulator, hooks on to the ST's DMA port. Tom Tolstead wonders if this IBM compatible is really & truly IBM compatible.
- * Atari has a CP/M 2.2 emulator which they bought from a company in Britain.
- * A battery-backed clock is now available. Details hopefully at the next meeting.
- * PRINT MASTER, a clone of PRINT SHOP, is now out.
- * GST Software wrote back to TH that 1ST-WORD Version 1.08 is soon available, and that a professional version called 1ST WORD PLUS will be available in the second quarter of '88.

DESIRED SOFTWARE

- * More Desktop Accessories programs. (There is a fine digital clock accessory and perpetual calendar, for example, on the MAST DOM #3 disk, as well as a file encryption program to ensure that your private files remain private.) What other helpful accessories are available?
- * What is the latest version available of DEGAS? Does it permit 45° and 90° rotations of the image as well as flip-flopping? Has anyone figured out how to design a brush that permits a small triangular shape that allows minimizing diagonal 'jaggies'?
- * Has anyone introduced an integrated WP/Drawing program, or at least a WP program that allows one to paste in draw/paint files from a Draw/Paint program that is already out on the market?
- * Would anyone like to review one of the programs that they use, with an eye to explaining it to the beginning computerist, and also in covering its quirks and quarks, and its workable shortcuts?
- * What types of programs would you like to see developed? What sorts of programs - or particular programs - would you like to see reviewed?
- * Perhaps you might bring a disk with a short write-up of a discovery or shortcut that you found to the meeting so that another member might copy it onto his/her disk for study at home.
- * Do you have any ideas for effectively organizing one's files and what types of info on what disk filing system? If there is a very organized person out there, please speak up! YOE for one is getting a headache wondering how to keep track of all his disks, files, and what sort of file to put on which disk! Help!

Submit An Article QUICK!!



XE - Practical Software - ST

by Dick Johnson

This month we feature HABA Check Minder and The Personnel Accountant, two Checkbook programs. I've used a Checkbook program (Text Wizard) for the past 2 years and therefore consider myself something of an expert. Check book programs definitely fall in the category of useful software. Not only does it help you balance your checkbook not enough to justify all that the keying of data, but its a data base of your checkbook. This allows you to search for that check that the gas company said they never got (and see if it cleared or not). At tax time it can product reports showing all your deductions and income if you deposit it before spending it. Budgets are usually a feature if your willing to spend the time to set one up. If not they can still give you a good idea of where all that money is going.

The biggest problem with checkbook and data base programs is all that keying. Check Minder has found a unique way of handling it. Since many of the checks you write are written to the same people and even for the same amount (loan payments, cable TV etc) Check Minder allows you to set up Reminders. This is a file of checks which can be marked for write check which will automatically add the check to you register and update the check date to the next month. Therefore often the only thing you have to type is the amount if it changed from the previous month. Personnel Accountant does the same type of function but only for 5 items and is designed only for automatic payment which you don't write a check for.

Habacheck has another nice feature in that the register is automatically arranged by number, date, name, category or cleared by the touch of a button. The default is check number but I prefer by date.

Although the price of these two programs are about the same \$80 the capabilities differ greatly. The Home Accountant could be used to run a same business, handling up to 5 different checkbooks, asset, liability, and expense accounts. Not to mention a Cash account and all your credit cards. Reports can be generated a Bar, Line, or even analysis graphs. Reports include Budget vs Actual, Personal Balance Sheet, Income & Expense and Activity Reports. HabaCheck's reports include Income & Expense by Category, Average Cash Flow, Account Activity, and Transaction Summary.

Habacheck contains no budget capabilities and although you can set up multiple checkbooks the reports generated will only reflect that one book destroying the usefulness of getting an overall picture of your finances. HabaCheck allows you to enter entries as checks, drafts, or deposits but has this unfortunate tendency of wanting to use the same number range for everything making it necessary to go back and correct check numbers. If your like me you use one range of checks for yourself and your spouse uses another. Haba

just can't handle this as it insists on using the highest check number when assigning the next number.

The Home Accountant is actually more program than most people will need, but you don't have to use all the features that are there, and can work into them later if you so decide. HabaCheck is extremely flexible but over priced for what it does and has a few nagging problems yet but with a few enhancements it could make an excellent program. Personally I find Financial Wizard, which I use, is a good compermise between these programs and cost about half as much.

Notes from the Pres. by Dick Johnson

The May meeting will be held June 1st this year so as not to interfere with the Memorial Day Weekend.

At the last meeting I suggested that if we cannot generate so interest, as well as money, that we should merge with the SPACE group a growing group. This has encouraged some people to volunteer for positions as officers. If your interested in helping out please give me a call at 521-0245. It doesn't have to be as an officer, there are many small job (like folding newsletters, retyping articles for the newsletter or taking notes at the meeting) If more people helped just a little then we wouldn't have so many burned out people after a year or two. Remember the work is light (even fun) if a lot of people are helping.

Nominations for officers will be held a the next meeting and election in June.

We also have a bumper crop of equipment (A 19" Color TV and a 48k 400 with keyboard) available for people who are willing to bring it or have it brought to each and every meeting.

Atari reports that there XM301 300 baud modem (\$50) is selling well and there are rumors that there is a 1200 baud in the works for \$100 and perhaps a 2400 baud for \$150.

Atari has also released a new dot matrix the XMMB01 which connects via the serial port and therefore does not require an 850 interface. The XMMB01 is epon compatible another good move, it looks as if Atari has finally learned that their not the whole computer world.

Star Raiders II is due out soon along with Atari Planetarium, Miditrack III and the Enhanced Racing Handicapping Program Package for all you racetrack fans.

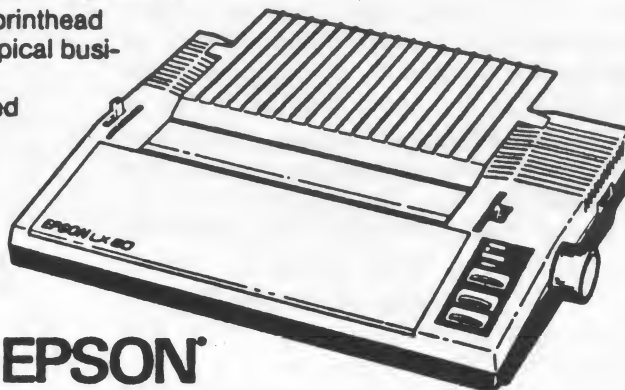
If you have AtariWriter Plus you might have a problem with your dictionary disk between "bloomers" and "tubbles". Atari will send you a corrected disk but Wizard Works will fix your disk right now if you bring it in.

Its starting to happen to us old 400 - 800 user. Were becoming obsolete. First it was programs needing 64k to run then 128k to make full use of them. Now it happening to our old faithful 810 disk drives. Both "Silent Butler" and "Atari Planetarium" require 1050 disk drives.

The facts are in on the Epson LX-80 Printer.

It's a fact that the LX-80 offers a combination of value and performance for all your business printing needs.

- Prints 100 characters per second printhead speed; fast enough to turn out a typical business letter in under 50 seconds.
- Dual mode operation for high speed drafts or typewriter-style copies.
- Narrow carriage handles a wide range of small to medium-sized copies.
- Selectype for an array of typestyles.
- One year warranty.



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New Hope (North Side of Bldg)

545-2136



Twin Cities Atari Interest Group.
3342 Humboldt Avenue North
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55412

Next TAIG Meeting
Sunday, June 1
NOTE DATE CHANGE
TAIG 7:00 p.m.
at St. Louis Park Rec Center
5005 West 36th Street
St. Louis Park, Mn.